



Ron Bloom, Manufacturing Czar, to Leave White House

"For the past two-and-a-half years, Ron Bloom's leadership and expertise has helped us put America's automakers back on the road to recovery, launch new partnerships to make our manufacturers more competitive and set aggressive fuel economy standards that will save consumers and businesses money at the pump," President Obama [professed](#) in a statement. Bloom complemented the President's remarks, saying he is "confident in this administration's ability to build on these accomplishments and continue our efforts to revitalize the manufacturing sector."



A former investment banker and negotiator for the United Steelworkers union, Bloom has been viewed by Washington "constituents" — a good deal of them union leaders — as a valuable asset, and an "alternative" voice for the manufacturing industry because a good majority of the President's aides come from academic backgrounds. "Ron's voice will be sorely missed in this administration," [bemoaned](#) Scott Paul, executive director of the Alliance for American manufacturing. "He had a deep knowledge base of all the elements that contribute to a successful manufacturing base in this country: labor, business, Wall Street. I don't think he's replaceable."

Over Bloom's brief tenure in the administration, he has taken heavy criticism for some controversial remarks and his dominant role in the GM and Chrysler bailouts. In February 2008, Bloom [delivered a speech](#), entitled "Asserting the Union Position in Restructurings," where he attacked the free market and "agreed" with the political ideologies of Mao Tse-Tung, the Chinese dictator who killed tens of millions of his own people:

Generally speaking, we get the joke. We know that the free market is nonsense. We know that the whole point is to game the system, to beat the market, or at least find someone who will pay you a lot of money because they're convinced that there is a free lunch. We know this is largely about power, that it's an adults-only, no-limit game. We kind of agree with Mao that political power comes largely from the barrel of a gun. And we get it that if you want a friend you should get a dog.

Bloom's statement rang loud with conservative pundits and brought a wave of skepticism over his motives for the manufacturing industry — not to mention, his overall perception of the economy — though he has dismissed the comments as rough humor.

After joining the Obama administration in February 2009, and serving as deputy to "car czar" Steve Rattner, Bloom secured an active role in the bankruptcy restructurings of GM and Chrysler. Critics scrutinized Bloom's previous experience with the unions, particularly as he planned for the \$85 billion bailout of Detroit — a breeding ground for Big Labor. Indeed, Bloom's union ties bred a profound and highly relevant question: "Was his primary objective to save jobs or save the unions?"

At a farewell dinner of the Auto Task Force in July 2009, in reminiscing about the auto bailout, Bloom



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allegedly [declared](#), "I did this all for the unions." Amidst the bailout aftermath, Bloom was asked by a congressional oversight committee if the allegations against him were true.

Under oath, Bloom denied the comment, but two highly credible sources claimed otherwise. The first source was Steve Rattner — Bloom's former boss — who [documented](#) the supposed remark on page 269 of his auto bailout book *Overhaul*. The second source was David Shepardson, a highly respected Washington bureau chief of the *Detroit News*. Responding to Bloom's repudiation, three members of the House wrote in a letter, "It appears that either a respected reporter and your former boss in the Obama Administration have both given inaccurate accounts of your comments to the public, or your testimony was not completely truthful." Regardless, if one thing is true, Bloom's devotion to the union cause is unmistakable.

The White House has not provided a reason for Bloom's departure, but his farewell comes at a delicate time for U.S. manufacturing. "Over the past 13 years, about a third of our manufacturing jobs have vanished," [mourned](#) Obama at an aluminum plant in June. Indeed, at a time when the U.S. economy is floundering, with manufacturing being a primary victim of the damage, the Obama's senior advisor to manufacturing is returning home to Pittsburgh.

It appears it's time to mark another Obama staff member off the roster.

Photo of Ron Bloom: AP Images



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